



# Greater Horn of Africa Peace Building Project

Mary Hope Schwoebel

CASE STUDY SEVEN:

## Impact Evaluation of The War-Torn Societies Project:

Somaliland

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in Controlling Violent Conflicts and Building Peace**  
*A Study of Three Approaches in the Greater Horn of Africa*

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The full report can be found at:

[http://www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/conflictweb/pbp\\_report.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/conflictweb/pbp_report.pdf)

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## Executive Summary

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In 1991, four months after the collapse of the government of the Somali Democratic Republic, and the flight of its President, Mohamed Siyad Barre, the Republic of Somaliland was declared an independent state. The past decade has witnessed the struggle of the young state to resolve violent internal conflicts, to build sustainable peace among the different groups that constitute its population, to build a state that will sustain peace, and to rebuild an economy that will sustain the population. At the turn of the century, it has remarkably make significant progress towards accomplishing the first two aims, and is now embarking on the second two, perhaps more challenging, aims.

The War-Torn Societies Program (WSP) is a participatory action research (PAR) program that facilitates policy-oriented dialogue between representatives of the different sectors of the society - national government, local government, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and other actors appropriate to the topic of specific dialogues - with the goal of contributing to post-conflict peace building. Although WSP aims to engage all levels of society in the dialogue process, the majority of participants in the program are middle- and higher- (although not highest) level actors.

The field research for the evaluation was conducted during the two-week period from September 10 to September 24. One week was spent in Nairobi, Kenya and one week was spent in Somaliland. The research included interviews in Nairobi and Hargeisa, interviews and a focus group in Sheikh, and observation of two days of a three day WSP workshop in Gabiley and focus groups with some of the participants in the workshop.

The War-Torn Societies Program, produces tangible products in the form of documentation of the substantive issues that emerge from the participatory action research process. While the quality and utilization of these products can be assessed, the fundamental goal of the program is focused less on the products than on the process itself, which is intangible. As such, assessing the program presents unique challenges, since its impacts on peace building can rarely be separated from the impacts of other interventions and other events. In addition, the program is still in its early phases in Somaliland, so it is too soon to gauge the overall impact that it is likely to make.

Nevertheless, the stage of peace building in which Somaliland is situated, combined with Somaliland's particular history and culture, suggests that WSP is an ideal intervention for Somaliland at the present time. The findings of this evaluation confirm this to be the case. For although the intervention has not made - and does not aim to make - immediate tangible contributions to peace (such as the signing of peace accords), the multiplex causes of the conflicts in Somaliland and the complex nature of the choices that have to be made in relation to state-building and reconstruction, can only be resolved by processes that allow these complexities to be articulated and the implications of different courses of action to be explored.

There are a number of ways in which the program might enhance its impacts. One is to find a way to strengthen its relationships with international organizations, both in Hargeisa and in Nairobi, in a way that does not diminish ownership of the program by Somalilanders. The second is to renew its commitment to the full integration of women into the political and economic life of Somaliland as a key goal. Finally, As WSP expands its work to regions beyond Somaliland and Puntland, it is recommended that the program begin in regions on the periphery, rather than in Mogadishu.

## Introduction

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Among the goals of the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative Peace Building Project is the development of policy guidelines for best practices. One component of the Project involves the evaluation of the impacts of three different intervention types - middle-level dialogues, peace radio, and grassroots-level intercommunal dialogue - as they have been implemented in six different contexts in the sub-region. This paper presents the findings of an evaluation of the impact of the War-Torn Societies Program (WSP) as it has been implemented in Somaliland.

WSP is a participatory action research (PAR) program that facilitates policy-oriented dialogue between representatives of the different sectors of the society - national government, local government, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and other actors appropriate to the topic of specific dialogues. Although WSP aims to engage all levels of society in the dialogue process, the majority of participants in the program are middle- and higher (although not highest) level actors. The field research for the evaluation was conducted during the two-week period from September 10 to September 24. One week was spent in Nairobi, Kenya and one week was spent in Somaliland. The research included interviews in Nairobi and Hargeisa, interviews and a focus group in Sheikh, and observation of two days of a three day WSP workshop in Gabiley and focus groups with some of the participants in the workshop.

This paper will begin with an overview of the events leading to Somaliland's declaration of independence in 1991, the internal conflicts that occurred in the middle of the decade, the processes that brought about the current peace, and the ongoing processes of peace building and state-building. Traditional political and jural culture, how these have evolved over time, and existing capacities for peace will also be examined.

The sources of past conflicts in Somaliland and potential sources of threats to sustainable peace will be discussed, focusing on six dimensions that the conflict resolution and peace building literature identify as both common causes of protracted conflicts and as areas on which interventions aim to have an impact. These are: economic sources, inter-group relationships, mobilization, public institutions and processes, political leaders and specific issues, and public behavior and events.

The War-Torn Societies Program, both worldwide and as it has been implemented in Somaliland will be described and the findings of the "process" component of the evaluation will be discussed. The findings of the "outcomes" component of the evaluation will be discussed as they impact on the six dimensions listed above. In addition, internal and external circumstances that may have affected the program's impact will be examined. Finally, some recommendations for enhancing the program's contribution to building sustainable peace in Somaliland, as well as in Somalia, will be made.

## Events of the Conflict

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### Conflict in the Somali Democratic Republic

For at least a decade, the government of the Somali Democratic Republic under dictator Mohamed Siyad Barre had singled out the Isaq clan family of, what was then, northwestern Somalia for political and economic oppression. In response, an opposition group, the Somali National Movement (SNM) was organized and established bases in Ethiopia. The SNM waged a guerrilla war against Barre's forces in northwestern Somalia that resulted in further retaliation against the Isaq. Meanwhile the Barre regime strove to sow the seeds of conflict between the Isaq and other clan families of northwestern Somalia, including the Gudabirsi clan of the Dir clan family and the Dolbahante and Warsangeli clans of the Darod clan family.

The conflict with Barre's regime became all out war in April 1988, with the signature of a peace accord between Somalia and Ethiopia, agreeing to normalize their relations and to cease supporting each other's opposition groups (the Somali groups being the SNM and the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) from the northeastern region of Somalia). In desperation, the SNM attacked government military installations in Hargeisa and Burco. Barre's forces responded with a massive air and ground assault, bombarding northern cities and laying land mines. An estimated 50,000 people were killed and at least half a million fled to refugee camps in Ethiopia and Djibouti. One Somalilander who was in Hargeisa at the time of the bombing commented, "at different times in my lifetime I have expected to be bombed by the British, by the Italians, by the Americans, by the Russians, by the Kenyans, and by the Ethiopians, but I have never expected to be bombed by Somalis."

In the meantime, new opposition groups were organizing in the southern regions of Somalia. Two years later, one of these, the United Somali Congress (USC) marched on Mogadishu, resulting in the flight of Siyad Barre and the total collapse of the government. Somalia remained without a central authority until the National Peace Conference in Djibouti (2001) that formed a government. It is too soon to say whether or not it can establish its authority and its legitimacy throughout the country and build a lasting peace.

The Republic of Somaliland, (encompassing the territory that constituted the former British Somaliland Protectorate) declared its independence from the rest of Somalia in May 1991 and quickly set about the business of internal peace building and nation-building. However, a decade of oppression and conflict had left the country and the people devastated by war and its infrastructure and its institutions largely destroyed.

### Conflict, Peace Building and State Building in Somaliland

In February 1991, a conference of the *Guurti* - the council of traditional clan leaders or Elders of Somaliland - took place in Berbera. The meeting established a cease-fire and fixed the date for another conference to be held in Burco in April and May. The

accomplishments of the Burco conference included the declaration of the independence of the Somaliland Republic, the establishment of a transitional two-year rule by the SNM (which included a role for non-Isaq clans during this period), and the initiation of a peace process with the eastern region of Sanaag. Abdulrahman Ahmed Ali “Tuur”, a former diplomat, the incumbent Chairman of the civilian wing of the SNM, and a Haber Yoonis (a sub-clan of the Garxajis clan of the Isaq clan family), was made interim President of the transitional administration. From February until September 1991, Somaliland enjoyed a period of peace.

The Burco conference, while it contributed to peace between the Isaq and neighboring clans, did not address tensions within the Isaq clans and within the SNM. With few financial resources, the interim administration was unable to control the still armed and mobilized SNM, as well as non-Isaq, militias. This inability to impose law and order resulted in rampant insecurity and political uncertainty.

“Tuur’s” administration soon found itself at war with a coalition of clan-based militias, which were linked to the *Calan Cas*, the military wing of the SNM. The *Calan Cas* accused the government of being dominated by civilians and “Tuur”’s Haber Yoonis clan at the expense of the military and other clans. The association of the first SNM interim administration with the Haber Yoonis led the rival Haber Jeclo to become the first major Isaq clan to oppose the interim administration. The long-standing rivalry between the Haber Yoonis and Haber Jeclo, which had been subordinated during the civil war in the face of a common enemy, now reasserted itself with a vengeance.

Competition for political and economic dominance (of the livestock trade in particular) resulted in the outbreak of violent conflict between the Haber Yoonis and Haber Jeclo clans in the town that they share, Burco, in January 1991. The confrontation was short-lived, and was resolved by the Gudabirsi and other non-Isaq clan Elders (a role they played in subsequent intra-Isaq conflicts as well), but it highlighted the inability of the *Guurti* to resolve the internal tensions of the SNM, and contributed to a more serious subsequent conflict.

The second outbreak of violence occurred in Berbera between the Haber Yoonis and the Cisa Musa. In March 1992, the administration attempted to form a national army and to establish government control of revenue-generating public facilities, including the lucrative port of Berbera. The government had few sources of revenue, while the port was providing the militias with the resources to purchase weapons. This was therefore perceived as a significant source of continuing insecurity.

The town of Berbera is inhabited by several Isaq clans, including the Saad Musa (who have substantial business interests in the town), the Cisa Musa (the original inhabitants of the town), the Haber Yoonis, and other smaller clans. The Cisa Musa, whose militias controlled the port, perceived this move as an attempt by the Haber Yoonis to usurp their control of this revenue-generating resource. In an effort to avoid an escalation of the conflict, all but the Haber Yoonis withdrew from the army and the attempt to gain control of the port. Six months of violent conflict ensued between the two clans. The

efforts of both the Isaq political elite and the Isaq *Guurti* failed to resolve the conflict during this period.

Finally, in October 1992, the *Guurti* intervened, with the Gudabirsi once again playing the role of peacemaker. A conference was held in Sheikh at which a ceasefire was agreed to and an agenda was set for a subsequent conference of the *Guurti* in Borama to restore peace (*nabadeyn*) and to deliberate the future of Somaliland (*aaya ka talin*). This conference, referred to as the Grand Borama Conference, took place between January and May of 1993. The 150-member *Guurti* and hundreds of delegates and observers from across Somaliland participated in the conference.

Several important agreements were reached at the Grand Borama Conference. The first was the transition from the SNM interim government to a system based on clan representation. Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Cigal, a civilian and a Cisa Musa from Berbera, was selected to be president and Abdirahman Aw Ali, a Gudabirsi, was selected to be vice-president. The choice of Cigal was designed both to appease the Cisa Musa and to divide them, which served to undermine their power in Berbera. Third, a National Charter and a Peace Charter, were adopted. These were to serve as the framework for the next two years during the processes of state building and peace building, respectively.

The National Charter served as an interim constitution from 1993 to 1997, while the Peace Charter outlined procedures for the peace building mandate of the *Guurti*, who were to review and revise the ongoing peace processes throughout the country. The administrative structure agreed to at the conference is made up of three branches: a two-chamber legislature, an executive council, and an independent judiciary. One chamber of the legislature is comprised of an elected parliament, while the other is comprised of the Council of Elders, the *Guurti*.

The government of Cigal was more successful than that of “Tuur” in establishing its authority over revenue-generating public facilities, such as the port of and the customs office in Gabiley, through which *qaat* imported from Ethiopia must pass, which created a source of income for the administration to carry out its basic functions and to send peace building delegations all over Somaliland. The introduction of the Somaliland shilling and the opening of the central bank bolstered the financial base of the administration. A judicial system made up of regional and district courts and a police force were established and began operations, at least in the central and western towns over which the had government control.

Yet peace was again disrupted in November 1994, by violent conflict between government forces (a coalition of non-Garxajis clans) and Garxajis militias over the control of Hargeisa airport in November 1994. The conflict expanded to engulf Burco in March 1995 and continued until 1996, resulting in considerable destruction in both cities. In the midst of the conflict in 1995, Cigal's first tenure in office expired. The *Guurti* extended his term in office by 18 months to avoid the total disintegration of Somaliland. However the opposition viewed this decision as unconstitutional and a



violation of the National Charter.

The conflict had de-escalated by the time the next *Guurti* conference was held in Hargeisa between October 1996 and February 1997. At this conference, Cigal was chosen for another five-year term as president, and a new vice-president, Dahir Riyalle Kahin, was chosen. An agreement was also reached on a new three-year provisional constitutional document, which has served as the first draft of the constitution, the share of opposition groups in the two chambers of the legislature was increased, and minority communities were given a share.

Somaliland has continued to enjoy peace since the Hargeisa conference. As one member of Parliament said, “By the time the WSP started, there was peace throughout Somaliland and it is getting better everyday.”. Everyone who was interviewed as part of this evaluation acknowledged that it is, however, a fragile peace. Monumental tasks remain, including the preparation of the Provisional Constitution, a proposed referendum on the Provisional Constitution and the sovereignty of Somaliland, the establishment of political parties, a national election, reconstruction of infrastructure, the establishment of financial institutions, development of the social services sector, and many others. It is to these tasks that WSP addresses itself.

*(The information for this section was based on interviews conducted as part of this evaluation, the Self-Portrait of Somaliland and the unpublished manuscript for a forthcoming book by Ahmed Yusuf Farah.)*

## Indigenous Conflict Resolution and Existing Capacities for Peace

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Traditionally, the basic political and jural unit of the pastoralist society of Somaliland was the *diya*-paying group, which is constituted by a lineage or coalition of lineages (comprised of a depth of between 4 and 8 generations within the sub-clan). Lewis (1994) defines the *diya*-paying group as "a corporate agnatic group whose members are united in joint responsibility towards outsiders". The *diya*-paying group is collectively responsible for the payment of compensation in the event of the death or injury of a member of another group at the hands of one of its members. It is also collectively entitled to the receipt of compensation in the event of the death or injury of one of its members at the hands of a member of another group. Although based on lineage, the *diya*-paying group is nevertheless somewhat fluid, especially when it involves coalitions of lineages.

The primacy of the *diya*-paying group was mitigated somewhat by the practice of *xeer* which was sometimes complementary with and sometimes contrary to genealogical relationships. *Xeer* is an enforceable, formal contract, that can be of a political, an economic, or a social nature, and of either a long-term or a short-term duration. Yet Somalilanders often use the term to describe different situations that form a continuum from a formal agreement to a custom. Both the breeching of a formal agreement and the violation of a custom are subject to sanctions.

Traditionally there were no formal positions of authority in Somaliland. Elders represented the lineage segments at the levels of clans, sub-clans and *diya*-paying groups; and policies were made in meetings in which all adult male members of the group had the right to participate. The scope of the participants (in terms of the structural level of lineage segments) was determined by the situation - a classic feature of segmentary lineage systems.

The British colonial administration, however, formalized both *diya*-paying group and *xeer*. According to Lewis (1994), "Diya-paying groups act similarly in less serious issues and the interests of their members are defined by written treaties (sg, heer) which are lodged in District Offices" and "Diya-paying contracts thus define the basic jural and political status of the individual and are so regarded by the administration in the settlement of disputes".

However, both the British colonial administration and Siyad Barre's government were dependent on the heads of *diya*-paying groups as intermediaries between their administrations and the people of Somaliland. Both the British and Barre attempted and often succeeded in using Elders to extend their authority over their constituencies, and although formal authority was not vested in Elders, under either the British or Barre, they often received generous compensation.

In Somaliland there is a relationship between territory and lineage (at the clan family and clan levels, but not at the sub-clan level) based, not on ownership, but on occupation of the land. "Thus, ultimately, men and their stock move where they will be

subject only to their ability to maintain their position against others, if necessary by force. It is usually only in time of war, or when there is exceptional pressure on available grazing, that prescriptive rights of use are claimed and, if they are challenged, these can be maintained effectively only by force." (Lewis, 1994).

Colonialism changed these relationships however. Simons (1995) writes, "....the requirements of pastoral nomadism - with grazing areas and water points often left unprotected - can lead to festering disputes over who actually controls these invaluable resources. Without being able to permanently stay put, groups of Somalis have had to work out their differences over these areas through negotiation or conflict on a seasonal basis....." But, she continues, "...colonial officials sought to curtail pastoral sources of conflict through more clearly defining which grazing grounds and water sources belonged to which groups. At the same time, the very process of mapping clear lines of usership led to intense jockeying among rival groups of Somalis before control could be established and then once it was, over whether the new rules were just."

Post-colonial government policies, international development assistance policies, and the urbanization that resulted from them, further contributed to modifying the traditional political and judicial systems of urban Somaliland populations - not to mention their subsistence bases. Urbanization contributed to changing the bases of individual identity as well. In the post-colonial urban setting lineage continued to be the fundamental building-block of individual identity, but that source of identity overlapped with other sources of identity, including education and profession. In spite of the fact that who became a member of educated and professional classes or the political and business elites was largely determined by lineage, identity based on membership in these other groups had a life of its own that was separate from lineage identity. All that ended with the outbreak of the war, when clan identity became a matter of life and death. Individuals who may have once aspired to be "clan-blind" suddenly had no choice but to revive the primacy of clan.

The practice of *xeer* was also modified by and adapted to urbanization. Suddenly clans who had no previous contact, and who had quite different traditions of *xeer*, were living side by side - and having conflicts with each other. When a conflict arose between urban residents who were members of different clans, the Elders of each clan got together and discussed how the *xeer* addressed conflicts of a similar nature in their respective regions of origin or within their respective clan families. They then forged a new *xeer* (since it was understood that other conflicts of a similar nature were sure to arise in the future) that was agreeable to both and that made sense in the urban context. (This material is based on interviews that were conducted as part of this author's dissertation research.)

Thus many practices were modified during the transition from rural to urban settings in ways that enabled them to continue to be effective for resolving conflicts and other crises. This was the case for practices such as *dija*, for example payments that used to be made in camels, were now made in the cash equivalent of camels. But other practices involving collective responsibility for individual misdeeds pose problems that

are not so easily resolved in the context of an urbanized nation-state.

The experience of WSP researcher highlights the fact that this is a challenge that remains to be faced by the nation-state. The researcher responsible for the Livestock Marketing Workshop in Burco was arrested by local police and put in jail when he arrived in town to conduct the workshop. It emerged that a member of the researcher's clan had been killed a member of a clan from Burco. The researcher was to be held until his clan fulfilled its *diya* obligations to the clan of the victim. Other members of the WSP researcher team conducted the workshop and negotiations with local authorities eventually secured the researcher's release. Such occurrences are not unusual in a context in which parallel - and fundamentally different - justice systems exist simultaneously.

As described in the previous section, the *Guurti* not only fulfilled its traditional functions in the context of the vacuum created by the collapse of the Somalia Democratic Republic and the troubled fledgling Somaliland administrations, it ingeniously adapted them to a much changed and more challenging context. Their successes at peace building, and Cigal's dependence on them during the early years of his administration, earned them an important and institutionalized place in the new government.

However institutionalization of the *Guurti* involved a trade off. Farah (2000) writes, "But the new status of the *Guurti* as salaried civil servants cost them their perceived neutrality and moral authority, central elements in the traditional method of reconciliation in Somali society. With a vested interest in the survival of the government, the *Guurti* utterly failed to settle peacefully the second cycle of fighting between their paymasters (the government) and the Garxajis opposition. The politicization of the *Guurti* undermined an important local peacemaking instrument and allowed the fighting to drag on much longer than did the first cycle of fighting."

The failure of the *Guurti* to dispense their constitutionally mandated role as peacemakers and conflict resolvers, resulted in the intervention in 1995 of the Somaliland Peace Committee, comprised of a group of intellectuals and professionals from the diaspora. Both parties to the conflict - the government and the opposition - were suspicious of the motivations of the Peace Committee, and as a result their contributions as a third party were consequently less than they might have been. Nevertheless their efforts helped "to put peace back on the agenda" (Farah, 2000).

More importantly the intervention of the Somaliland Peace Committee suggests that the diaspora is another untapped resource for peace building. Indeed, Somalilanders possess greater resources than are generally perceived or acknowledged, by either themselves or by the international community. Logan (2000) writes, "They have a rich, highly democratic political tradition, and their more recent political experiences have produced deeply ingrained lessons about what does not work, as well as a strongly felt and widely shared desire for peace.... In combination with the keen interest of and resources provided by the diaspora, as well as the often underestimated local resource base, these characteristics have proven powerful tools for locally-driven political and

economic reconstruction.”

### **The Stage of the Conflict**

Adam Curle (1971) identifies four stages in the progression of a conflict based on a three-sided matrix. At the top of the matrix is a continuum from unpeaceful to peaceful. There are three stages along this continuum: static, unstable, and dynamic. At the bottom of the matrix is a continuum from low to high awareness of the conflict. There are two stages along this continuum: latent conflict and overt conflict. On the right hand side of the matrix is power, the bottom half representing unbalanced power and the top half representing balanced power.

Of the six quadrants formed, two are empty, while four suggest interventions appropriate to the conditions in the quadrant. Quadrant one, with low awareness of the conflict, unbalanced power, and static relations, suggests education. Quadrant two, with high awareness of the conflict, unbalanced power, and unstable relations, suggests confrontation. Quadrant three, with high awareness of the conflict, balanced power, and unstable relations, suggests negotiation. Finally, quadrant four, with balanced power and dynamic relations, suggests sustainable peace.

In quadrant four, successful negotiations and/or mediation have resulted in a restructuring of the relationship around both substantive and procedural issues. Curle refers to these as “increased justice” and “more peaceful relations”, reminding us that in any stage of the conflict, it can jump forward, jump backward, or cycle through all four of the quadrants for extended periods of time. At this writing, Somaliland is situated on the cusp of the third and fourth quadrants (although since independence, at different times and in different places, it has cycled through each of the quadrants). This is the phase or location that WSP specifically and explicitly targets.

## Sources of the Conflict: Six Dimensions of Interest

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### Economic Sources

Prior to the civil war the Somali Democratic Republic was one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world, whether the instrument used to measure it was based on macroeconomic indicators or human development indicators. Two decades of economic crises, political crises and conflict have devastated the economy of both Somalia and Somaliland.

In Somaliland, Siyad Barre's assault, the subsequent internal wars, and the random destructiveness of the *day-day* (gangs of armed young men, some of whom are remnants of the militias, who have become common thugs and bandits) have resulted in the destruction of both public and private infrastructure, including utilities, runways, roads, bridges, port facilities, factories, wells, irrigation systems, and abattoirs.

Both public and private institutions relating to the economy have also ceased to function. With the exception of the Central Bank of Somaliland, financial institutions, including commercial banks, credit institutions, and insurance services, no longer exist. The government has not succeeded in creating a predictable regulatory climate, which has discouraged foreign investment. Markets have been monopolized by large traders at the expense of small traders and consumers. Finally, taxation is uncoordinated between the different levels of government, creating unpredictability and a heavy burden for business people.

But for Somalilanders, the economic sources of the conflict are related as much, if not more, to the inequitable distribution of resources than to the absolute value of resources. Conditions in which some clans have had greater access to resources than other clans tend to generate more conflict than scarcity in and of itself. Such competitiveness is an outgrowth of the experience with the colonial administration, whose policies favored some clans over others, and more importantly, of the policies of post-colonial governments which hoarded resources for themselves and their own clans, and denied access to resources to others. Indeed, Siyad Barre's denial of access of resources to the Isaq clan family was one of the worse cases of this phenomenon in Somali history.

Foreign assistance has also often contributed to conflict generation in Somalia and Somaliland. There are two primary reasons for this. The first is that some development assistance has been downright inappropriate. This began with the colonial administration's digging of wells in the Haud that resulted in environmental degradation and sedentarization, (both of which inadvertently created winners and losers) and continued until the collapse of the government of the Somali Democratic Republic. The second is that post-colonial governments deliberately employed foreign assistance to create winners and losers. Somalilanders were victims of such policies during the humanitarian crisis created by the irredentist war between Somalia and Ethiopia. Siyad Barre used humanitarian assistance to create advantages for refugee populations (from

his mother's *Ogaden* clan) at the expense of Somalilanders on their own soil.

Indeed, the paucity of development assistance was attributed, by some Somalilanders interviewed for this paper, as one of the reasons that Somaliland has been so successful in achieving peace. It has enabled Somalilanders to seek solutions to their own economic and political problems in their own ways and at their own pace. It has also lessened conflict between different individuals and groups who would have vied for access to and control of foreign assistance resources.

As in most African countries, a contributing cause of violent conflicts over control of the government is related to the use of that control (of revenues and/or of foreign assistance) as a source of personal enrichment. This is in part because there was a paucity of income-generation alternatives. That is less the case in Somaliland than in Somalia, where at least in the western part of the country, favorable conditions for livestock production and its location on the sea and in proximity to the Arabian peninsula, have contributed to a robust commercial sector during much of its history. The commercial sector continues to provide some Somalilanders opportunities outside of government for income-generation, if not enrichment.

Clan politics have resulted in the lack of the establishment of a permanent class of professionals based on meritocracy. Individuals with professional training often consequently leave for better opportunities elsewhere (although they return when their clan is in power) leading to further under development. Thus for example, while UNCTAD is rehabilitating infrastructure at Berbera port, it finds that institutional arrangements are an ongoing problem. While there are many Somalilanders with the technical training necessary to operate the port (UNCTAD offers technical training as well) retention of personnel depends on what clan is controlling the port at a given time.

The presence or absence of economic resources and who controls them also has an impact on security. Revenues can be used for peaceful means or to perpetrate violence. During the complex emergency in Somalia in the early 1990s, food and other supplies provided by humanitarian assistance organizations were stolen by militias and bandits and sold to purchase weapons. As has already been described in this paper, militias controlling the port in Berbera and later the airport in Hargeisa, used revenues from these sources to purchase weapons, thereby increasing both the actual level of violence and the potential for violence.

The need for demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants is recognized, but lack of resources and expertise has meant that the government and local business people have been unable to sustain their efforts. Anticipated aid for demobilization and reintegration from international organizations has not been forthcoming, although some NGOs have contributed modest support.

Somaliland suffers from exceedingly high unemployment, which is often cited as a source of insecurity, since lack of employment is since is considered one of the reasons for joining the militias and for banditry. High unemployment is in turn blamed for the pervasive use of *qaat*. Participants in the workshop on the impact of *qaat* on family and

society included *qaat* retailers, who are generally women. When one of the retailers was accused of being part of the *qaat* problem, she responded, "Give me another job and I will do something else."

There is general consensus that *qaat* contributes to all kinds of economic (consuming large percentages of both public and private time and money that could be used more productively) and social ills (having deleterious effects on physical and mental health and on marital and parental relationships); but without alternative sources of income *qaat* will continue to be an important source of income for individuals and an important source of revenue for the government, which a member of the national government reported accounts for as much as 20 percent of national and local governments' incomes.

However, it is the export of livestock that accounts for the bulk of Somaliland's and the government's income. In 1997, Somalilanders earned 176.6 million USD from livestock, from which the government revenues were 7 million USD (Ministry of Planning, 1998-1999). However, Somaliland's reliance on the livestock trade, and especially its almost complete reliance on one market, has been demonstrated to be a liability. Between October 1998 and March 1999, Saudi Arabia, Somaliland's main customer, imposed a complete ban on livestock imports from all countries in northeastern Africa, due to Rift Valley Fever. (There has been a ban on cattle from the region since 1983 due to rinderpest.) As soon as the ban was lifted, the economy boomed, only to have the ban imposed again in September of this year, because there were a number of deaths in Saudi Arabia caused by this zootic disease. The ban is still in place at this writing.

The result of the first ban highlighted another liability facing Somaliland's economy - the price paid by the administration to maintain peace. Farah (2000) explains, "The outbreak of war in 1994 derailed local efforts toward demobilization, politicized the issue of security and led to the reversal of a 1993 government pledge not to form an army. To the chagrin of the opposition, and at the cost of being accused of violating the Interim Charter, the government launched a relatively large-scale recruitment of clan militias into the National Army." But aside from what the government perceived to be its legitimate need for an army, the government used enlistment into the army and the civil service as an inducement and a reward for loyalty.

The 1998 livestock ban created a budget deficit and the administration was unable to pay the salaries of the inflated army and civil service. The administration thus appealed to international donors for financial assistance to cover the estimated revenue shortfall, and a portion of the shortfall was met by international organizations. Farah (2000) writes, "The government appeal and donor response documents reveal important information about the burden the large security forces and the inflated public service have placed on the limited budget of the administration: almost 95% of revenue is spent on administration (20-23%) and defense and security (72%). There is little going to the productive infrastructure (3%) and social (3-5%) sectors." International organizations continue to take up the slack in infrastructure rehabilitation and the provision of social



services, such as health care and education.

One member of the national government acknowledged that there are thousands of superfluous security forces on the government payroll in need of demobilization and reintegration. This is not only not sustainable, it impedes the development of the productive sectors, from which citizens can obtain sustainable and legitimate sources of non-governmental income. "Somaliland's checkered experience in peacekeeping and governance during the prolonged transition period bespeaks the disruptive influence SNM clan militias and the power struggle within the SNM political elite have had on political development, internal security, and overall socioeconomic reconstruction. The creation of a large army may overcome internal strife but it cannot guarantee domestic stability and an environment conducive to political rebuilding and a transition to a democratic system of governance." (Farah 2000).

### **Inter-Group Relationships**

It is commonly acknowledged that clan relations are one of the root causes of conflict in Somaliland. Indeed clan is the building block of individual and group identity. But this is not in and of itself problematic and can have positive as well as negative ramifications. In general it can be said that the root of the problem is to be found in the imposition of a Western-style nation-state on a people whose culture and history are entirely different from those of the West. This is especially the case when the nation-state that results is characterized by authoritarianism, corruption, nepotism, and other ills. However those ills are themselves partially a result of the poor fit between traditional and Western-style governance.

In Somaliland, the dominant Isaq family clan has been much more successful than was anticipated in resolving conflicts with other clan families - most notably with the Dir. It has had less success in addressing conflict within the Isaq. In addition, potential conflict between the Isaq and the Darod clan families of eastern Somaliland has remained latent for most of the past decade, rather than having been resolved.

There are other group and individual identities or categories around which people mobilize and which sometimes result in inter-group conflict. An important distinction in Somaliland since it declared independence pertains to the civilian versus the military wings of the SNM and their constituents. Militarized political culture may represent the most serious threat to sustainable peace both in terms of the ever-present threat of military takeover and the political culture of compliance in the face of authority. "Siyad Barre's militarized socialist state ruthlessly suppressed the evolution of democratic institutions and culture for a period of two decades. The final disintegration of the national forces and the governing military elite in January 1991 left an enduring political void and leadership crisis. The clan-based guerrilla organizations replacing the system of socialist military government were unable to establish centralized authority and resurrect the Somali State, thereby precipitating the country's dismemberment into unstable mini-states controlled by 'big men' (Farah, 2000). He continues, "The military elite governed the Democratic Republic of Somalia more than a decade longer than the

preceding civilian leaders, and therefore produced more military officials than civilians to aspire to public office in Somalia's post-military period. This left a legacy of entrenched militarization of political leadership that will take some time to reverse.... domestic peace and the return to a democratic system of governance are still very much influenced by the military elite.” The *Calan Cas* leaders fought for the independence of Somaliland and believe that they have earned their right to political power. They perceive that they are being deliberately ignored by Cigal’s administration and want to have a hand in governing the country.

Tension also exists between the Parliament and the *Guurti*, although it is not clear the extent to which this is a conflict between traditional and Westernized leaders and governance styles; or whether it is related to one of the main issues facing the drafters of the Constitution, which is the degree of power to reside in the Executive and the degree to reside in the Legislature. The *Guurti* has, in fact, supported Cigal’s efforts to form a centralized government based on a strong executive branch, while Parliament has generally supported the formation of a decentralized government based on a strong legislature. This has resulted in the *Guurti* and Parliament being opposed to each other on this issue. One MP said, “Cigal has used the Elders as a rubber stamp and he has used them against Parliament”.

There are also tensions between government and civil society. A decade ago, civil society in any sense, was an almost non-existence phenomena in Somaliland and Somalia. Civil society has come into being during the past decade, for several reasons, including the insistence of international organizations that they have local partners to implement projects and through whom to channel funds, the vacuum left by the collapse of the Somali Democratic Republic’s government, as a means for members of the diaspora to provide assistance to Somaliland, and as a means of income-generation to gain access to donor funds targeted for specific populations (eg women) or activities (eg conflict resolution skills training).

Tension between government and civil society is inherent in a political culture with a legacy of authoritarianism and militarization. But tension has also been caused by international assistance to Somaliland that has not succeeded in balancing its support to strengthen civil society with its support to strengthen the government. The reasons for this are numerous, including the fact that not officially recognizing Somaliland has prohibited direct assistance to the government for some organizations, and the current climate in the international community which views governments as part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Somaliland society exhibits other cleavages - between urban and rural, between the young and the old, between those with formal education and those without, between the upper and middle classes and the masses, between those who have lived abroad and those who have not. These are for the most part overlapping cleavages that are cross-cut by clan. The cumulative effect of overlapping cleavages is that Somalilanders are divided by what Oscar Nudler refers to as a “worldview conflict”. In Somaliland, worldview conflict exists not only between groups, but also within individuals, especially

those who have returned from the diaspora. As more members of the diaspora return to Somaliland, the potential exists that there may be an increase in conflicts whose causes are differences of worldview. The highly contested issue of the role of women in Somaliland is a salient example of a worldview conflict.

At the time of this writing, religion in the sense of different approaches to Islam - was not a cause of conflict in Somaliland. In neighboring Puntland, relationships between the SSDF and Al-Itahad had been a source of conflict.

## **Mobilization**

The salient feature of mobilization in Somaliland has been the near impossibility of mobilizing groups on any basis other than clan. It has characteristically been all too easy for political elites to mobilize their clans to take up arms to protect perceived clan interests, as was seen by the ease with which Egal was able to mobilize members of the army belonging to his clan, but not members of the army belonging to other clans, during the conflict over the Berbera port.

“Somaliland’s prior experience of civil strife suggests that the most serious threat to peace derives from the deliberate mobilization of grievance based on perceived inequities between clans. Given the evident regional disparities that exist within Somaliland, the grounds for collective grievances are real, and constant vigilance is required if conflict is to be avoided.” (Self-Portrait of Somaliland, 2000, p. 32)

But there is an unfortunate lack of mobilization in Somaliland of other groups - considered by international interveners, at least - to be essential for democracy. Civil society is an imported category in Somaliland. It has come about only in the past decade, mainly in response to the need of international organizations to channel funds through and implement projects using local NGOs. This has resulted in a plethora of local NGOs whose main interest is income-generation for themselves and their constituents. Generally, local NGOs have been clan-based, have incompletely understood the concept of civil society, and have not been able to organize themselves to advocate for their own interests or for the interests of their constituents. NGOs and other civil society groups must also contend with a political culture that lacks an understanding of the role of civil society and that is deeply suspicious of civil society.

Women have also been unable to mobilize as an interest group. Women’s groups suffer from the same weaknesses that characterize other civil society groups. Yet many women in Somaliland are fed up with being marginalized in the economic and political arenas. During the war and in the present post-war period, women have provided economic and social safety-nets. As a member of a women’s NGO said, “We have taken care of our families and communities and have been the sole source of income for our families and communities. We are still doing those things while our men are unemployed and spending time and money chewing *qaat*.” Many women expressed the desire for change, but acknowledge that they lack the skills and the resources to pursue change effectively.

Logan (2000) writes, “In Somaliland and Puntland, women remain largely marginalized from participation in the political system, even as their role in the economy has increased dramatically during and after the conflict.... women must still struggle to overcome cultural barriers that discourage their participation in politics. Women have also been held back by their own failure to unify, coordinate and jointly plan their efforts. Given their increasing economic role and their ability to serve a positive bridging and mediating role within Somali society, greater women’s participation in politics should be a key goal.”

## **Public Institutions and Processes**

Somaliland is at a critical juncture in the process of state building at the time of this writing. It is currently engaged in the exercise of making changes to the provisional constitution with the goal of drafting a new Constitution that includes a transition from the clan-based system to an electoral system. The government has set an ambitious program for itself, that involves the following steps: (1) Parliament will debate changes to the provisional constitution article by article, until it is accepted by the two legislative houses. (2) The provisional constitution will be explained to the public over the radio, article by article. At the same time thousands of copies will be distributed for discussion. (3) A referendum will take place to approve or reject the provisional constitution. A vote in favor of the provisional constitution will also mean an endorsement of the sovereignty of Somaliland. (4) Political parties may then be established, in line with the new Constitution. (5) The final step will be a national election, in which the people will choose which party to lead them and elect a new government. (Self-Portrait of Somaliland, 2000, p.22-23) At this writing the first draft of the provisional constitution has been distributed and the second draft is being discussed in the two legislative houses.

The single most contested issue during this process is related to the issue of decentralization. Most Somalilanders are convinced that the most effective way to offset the political culture that has resulted from years of authoritarian governance is to adopt a federalist-type system, allowing the regions considerable autonomy. It is believed that this may be the only way to address real and perceived inequities between different clans and different regions. But numerous issues pertaining to the relationship between national and local governments will have to be resolved before Somaliland can successfully implement such a system. Several individuals interviewed said that the issue of decentralization is of concern to the national government, not because it entails a reduction of its power, but because of the fear of national disintegration, if it is implemented before Somaliland is ready.

A WSP staff member said, “In Somaliland, the theme of decentralization in particular has been threatening to the government because it is still trying to sell the idea of nationhood. The government has argued that decentralization will lead to disintegration. In fact, some representatives of the regions in Parliament are also against decentralization, because they are center-focused.”

Another issue that will have to be resolved by the new Constitution is related to the balance of power between the executive branch and the legislative branch. Not surprisingly, Egal favors the executive and the Parliament the legislative. Some individuals interviewed said that the *Guurti* supports Egal because they have been co-opted by him. Others said that the *Guurti* has served the role of mediating between Cigal and the Parliament. Several expressed the opinion that by centralizing power in the executive, Egal has failed to build the institutions necessary for the government's sustainability.

## **Political Leaders and Public Behavior**

A Somalilander interviewed for this paper provided the following explanation of how Cigal has brought about change during the nation-building process. It is included in its entirety: "Cigal recognized from the outset that one could not afford to ignore the military men. They have their pride and they have to be taken into account. What the old man did was to start by bringing in the generals and colonels and making them ministers, and allowing a degree of corruption, so that they could enrich themselves. Because they are satisfied they will go back to their regions. Little by little he began replacing them with civilians. Then he re-empowered the elders. He let it be known that if someone wanted something from the government, say a position in a Ministry, that they would have to gain access to him through their clan leaders. He did not do so by paying these clan leaders. Previously the elders had no power, although some were empowered through formal posts such as the *Guurti*. But the majority do not hold formal posts. At first each clan had a Ministry, then he started shifting things around so that different clans had access to different ministries at different times. Now he is slowly starting to change that as well. He wants a government that is based on elections rather than the *beeled* system."

## **The War-Torn Societies Project Worldwide**

WSP was created in June 1994 as a joint project of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies (PSIS) of the Geneva Graduate Institute for International Studies. It was launched to assist societies emerging from conflict to identify which issues should be given priority in terms of policy, among the plethora of critical challenges confronting them. It was also launched for the purpose of improving international organizations' efforts to assist these societies.

WSP has been piloted in several countries: Guatemala, Mozambique, Eritrea, and Somalia and Somaliland. The methodology used is participatory action research (PAR) employing local research teams to promote and facilitate dialogue among the various actors involved in post-conflict rebuilding, by providing a neutral forum.

# The War-Torn Societies Project in Somaliland

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## Goals

WSP Somaliland was initiated with the goal of finding solutions to the difficulties faced by the international community in responding to the challenges of post-conflict rebuilding. Another goal is the facilitation of an internal, national process belonging to local actors involved in post-conflict rebuilding. In this sense it is a PAR program in which dialogue and research are used together to set priorities and identify policy options. The process is characterized by consensus building and capacity building in a neutral space.

WSP's research goals include learning about the relationships between research and policy-formulation and the application of action-research at micro and macro levels. The program also aims to produce lessons relating to the positioning of research in relation to political processes and state building. Finally, the program aims to fashion the lessons learned into tools that can be used to effect change in the way that external organizations plan, implement, and coordinate their activities in countries emerging from conflict.

## Objectives

WSP program objectives in Somaliland include ensuring that international assistance contributes to building peace and does not contribute to renewed conflict, promoting PAR as a vehicle for democratizing development and empowering communities and disempowered groups such as women, strengthening the capacity of national and local government and civil society organizations to contribute to state-building and reconstruction, and building the capacity and ensuring the sustainability of a successor body, namely the Somaliland Center for Peace and Development. The Director of SCPD, explained that the idea is to create a "neutral space" where intellectuals can come to develop and discuss their ideas. "It is not neutral in the sense in which that word is generally understood - we all know that that type of neutrality doesn't exist, that people are only neutral in that sense when they are dead - rather, neutral in the sense of being able to step back from one's emotions, if only as long as it takes to drink a cup of tea, and neutral in the sense that all ideas can be entertained and can be expressed openly."

## Implementation

The first activity of the program is training the local researchers about the WSP PAR process. In Puntland, WSP has spent only days on the training and therefore found that the researchers did not have a thorough understanding of the process and had to be retrained. Learning from this experience, WSP Somaliland therefore spent a month on this activity.

The first phase of the program was the preparation of the Country Note. This is a

substantive paper discussing the key political, economic, and social issues facing the country. It was prepared using both existing documentation and by conducting focus groups in communities throughout Somaliland. The focus groups were conducted in cities, towns, and villages. One government official said, “They went to every corner of the country. The only place they did not go was to the wells. The pastoralists were the one group that was not included. A brainstorming methodology was developed (it was initially tested in Gabiley and the villages surrounding it) that involved informal give and take discussions around areas of interest to the participants. A Self-Portrait of Somaliland: Rebuilding from the Ruins is the title of the results of this research.

The first draft was published in November 1999. Over 300 copies were distributed to representatives of national and local government, members of civil society, professionals, intellectuals, and Elders, who were invited to a meeting in Hargeisa at which feedback was solicited. Based on the feedback from the meeting and on inputs received formally and informally by written and verbal means, the research team rewrote the document. The second draft was printed and 300 copies were again distributed in January 2000 to government, civil society organizations, and international organizations. It was also distributed to some of the communities where the focus groups had been conducted to solicit their feedback on the document.

Out of the research and discussion four Entry Points emerged. These are broad themes that have been identified as priorities for research. (The researchers said they were surprised by the themes, because they had assumed that the people’s priorities would include health, education, water, and other social services - the sectors usually addressed by international organizations.) Under each of these themes, three sub-themes were identified. The themes and sub-themes and the locations where the workshops have been or are to be held are as follows:

### Media

Objectivity and Responsibility - Borama

Coverage and Influence - Borao

Media Environment - Hargeisa

### Governance

Decentralization - Beki

Taxation - Erigavo

Representation - Hargeisa

## Livestock Regulation

Marketing - Borao

Health and Export Markets - Berbera

Environment - Odeweyne

## Family

Impact of War - Sheikh

Impact of *qaat* - Gabiley

Institutional Support Systems - Hargeisa

Working Groups of professionals and stakeholders in each theme were formed. The Working Groups meet monthly in Hargeisa. The WSP researcher responsible for each theme is responsible for preparing a Discussion Paper that establishes a framework for future workshops based on the initial research and inputs from the Working Group. The Working Group provides feedback to the researcher who then makes changes, and back and forth it goes until an agreement is reached. The paper is then ready for the Thematic Workshop, where it is distributed to participants. The Discussion Paper is intended to catalyze discussion, frame the main issues, and identify key questions.

Before a workshop the researcher visits the community where it is to be held and identifies an anchorperson to be responsible for identifying participants. The process must adapt to local contexts. For example, in Burco, a polarized community comprised of two clans, it was necessary to utilize two anchor persons - from each of the two main clans living there.

The anchorperson is given a list of the categories of segments of the population who should be represented. These include members of civil society, local government officials, Elders, women's groups, and representatives of the relevant stakeholder groups, for example livestock wholesalers, retailers, and producers.

Workshops are generally comprised of about 20 participants. They are also generally attended by members of the research team and one or two representatives of the national government, who answer communities' questions about national processes and take the findings of the workshops to the *Guurti* and Parliament, respectively. (These individuals were chosen by these bodies to represent them in the workshops.)

The first workshop was held in May 2000. It is anticipated that the final workshop will be conducted in April 2001. At the time that this research was carried out, one workshop had been held on each of the four themes. The second workshop on the theme of the impact of *qaat* was held during the research period.



The general process followed by the workshops is to use the first day for “venting”, the second day for identifying issues, setting the agenda, and discussing alternatives, and the last day is to propose recommendations for addressing. Each evening during the workshop the team meets to summarize the day’s discussion and write the main points on flipcharts. The following day the flipcharts are shared with the participants. In addition, the team meets afterwards in Hargeisa to discuss the lessons learned about the process, so that it can be modified for subsequent workshops.

## **Strengths**

### Sustainability

One of the goals of WSP in both Somalia and Somaliland has been to institutionalize the PAR process by “handing it over” to a local organization. In Somaliland, the organization is an existing research center, the Somaliland Center for Peace and Development (SCPD). WSP and SCPD together have put together a group of researchers who represent some of Somaliland’s best and brightest. Most have returned to Somaliland from abroad to contribute to rebuilding their country. SCPD hopes to establish itself as a permanent institute that will be involved in research, training, documentation, publication, and dissemination. WSP and SCPD are generally conflated by Somalilanders.

### Staffing

Not only is WSP’s staff (both in Nairobi and in Somaliland) comprised of Somaliland’s brain trust, they work well together as a team. Staff members exhibit a sense of pride in being a member of the team as well as pride in and commitment to the work in which they are engaged. Each of the main clan families (Isaq, Darod, Dir) of Somaliland are represented on the staff. They appear to enjoy a considerable degree of respect from and the trust of those who have participated in the program. One government official said, “I trust the products (the Self-Portrait of Somaliland) because I trust the people on the research team to write the opinions of workshop participants, rather than their own opinions.”

### The Process

Almost without exception, individuals who participated in the WSP workshops reported positively about the process. The fact that they are paid to participate may skew the responses. Members of the Working Groups are not paid to participate, however, and they too were also unanimous in their positive statements about the process.

A government official said, “The process is different, but better, than traditional processes since everyone, including women, are present and have an opportunity to speak. The process acknowledges local authorities by giving them a chance to speak, but does not let them monopolize the discussion.”

Almost all participants in the workshops said that this was the first time they had had

the opportunity to sit down with representatives of national and local government and representatives of every segment of society to discuss issues of common concern. This experience seems to have been empowering for all types of participants, including the MPs and members of the *Guurti* themselves.

### The Products

The Self-Portrait of Somaliland and the anticipated Entry Point Papers will be significant accomplishments in and of themselves and should benefit national and local governments and international organizations, since they not only provide summaries of key discussions held at the workshops, but also analyses and syntheses of the key issues.

A member of a women's group said that not only did the process contribute to a better understanding of different groups' points of view in her own community, but that the Self-Portrait of Somaliland contributed to a better understanding of the points of view from different parts of Somaliland."

### Utilization of Lessons Learned

At both the international, Nairobi, and Hargeisa levels, WSP engages in an iterative process of action and reflection. In Somaliland, program staff were quick to incorporate lessons learned and adapt program approaches and activities accordingly. Some of these are discussed elsewhere in this paper.

## **Weaknesses**

### Lack of understanding of the process

There was considerable confusion about the purpose of the program. Women in one focus group said that they did not think that the program had had the impact that they had expected, because they had expected that the program would also do something about the problems. They also said that the recommendations that they made during the first phase had not been responded to (these were related to the need for hospitals and schools). Women in another focus group said, "We expected something to result from the workshop. We wanted the government to take the recommendations from the workshop and translate them into action that would benefit women in tangible ways." Such a response indicates a lack of an understanding of the purpose of the process. This is not surprising given the traditional activities of aid organizations in Somalia and Somaliland.

### Lack of Coordination with other international organizations in Somaliland

The lack of coordination with other organizations, especially those doing similar work, has added to the confusion about WSP's purpose, since on several occasions, WSP and the Life and Peace Institute (LPI) have offered workshops in the same locations during the same time period. WSP has also lost opportunities for increasing the impact

of the program. For example, in Puntland, WSP worked with UNESCO's "Radio of Peace" Program to disseminate WSP's findings over the radio, thereby reaching not only literate, but illiterate, populations, as well as a larger number of people for a fraction of the cost. This has not happened between WSP and other organizations in Hargeisa. (WSP is however videotaping portions of the workshops. These have been shared with the Working Groups as part of the preparation for subsequent workshops and have the potential to reach broader audiences as well.)

### Payment of Participants

WSP acknowledged that they had spent considerable time debating the dubious merits of paying participants per diem for attending the workshops. This generates some conflict as individuals and groups compete to participate in the workshops in order to receive the per diem. (It also may have created a conflict of interest when meeting with this author.)

### Slow Feedback or Lack of Feedback to and from Communities

One participant in the initial phase of the research complained that their community had never received copies of the Self-Portrait of Somaliland. One member of the government who was a participant in the meeting called to review the first draft of the Self-Portrait of Somaliland complained that their feedback was not incorporated in the final paper. A participant in the media workshop said that the products should be disseminated to more than just the government and international organizations and those workshop papers should be distributed more rapidly and more widely.

### Validity of the Research

Depending on an evaluator's epistemological preferences, there may be concerns about the validity of the research. One international consultant expressed the following concerns about the validity of the research, "First the number of participants is not significant, and second is that equal weight is given to all participants." From this author's perspective, the validity of the research is not especially problematic. Indeed, given the context, both the number of participants and the participant selection process, strengthen the validity of the research.

Admittedly, the products of the research determine which issues get emphasized, which ones get ignored, what information on various issues is presented, and which viewpoints are presented more convincingly. As such WSP and SCPD have a considerable influence over which voices and which viewpoints are heard by both internal and external actors.

## Paradoxes

### Neutrality versus Advocacy

The UNDP Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Randolph Kent, pointed out that WSP suffers from a paradox worldwide. “In post-conflict situations one has governments that are inherently incapable and communities that are by definition either antagonistic or linked to the government. The program claims to represent the community, but what community does it represent when there is no community? How can the program claim communication between communities and government when the project requires the buy-in of the government for implementation, requires that communities communicate honestly with the government, and at the same time the government does not tolerate criticism. In other words middle level dialogue could not exist without the consent of the government. And if the middle level is not in sync with the government, then the government will not give its consent, and if operates without the government's consent then the program does not fulfill its mandate and becomes an advocacy project.”

Menkhaus (2000) writes about WSP Puntland, “The very process WSP set in motion was anything but neutral, and was not in any way perceived as neutral locally. Creating space for broad-based dialogue had real political implications locally, creating winners and losers, benefiting some groups and threatening others.” In Somaliland, WSP’s research team appears to be closer to attainment of this quixotic goal.

However one perspective that does not seem to have been given voice is the one that questions the sovereignty of Somaliland itself. WSP Puntland was asked to address this issue - from the other side - and it, wisely, declined to do so. It may indeed be wise to skirt the issue in Somaliland as well. First, because the project would be shut down by the government if it was perceived in any way to be promoting reunification. Secondly, because Somalilanders are tired of conflict and many do not want to address the issue themselves - especially not until Somalia gets itself together. Many said that after so many years of war they would pay any price for peace.

### The Need to Strengthen Government and Civil Society

Another of the inherent paradoxes in the process is that in order to accomplish its goals of post-conflict state building, the program must seek to simultaneously strengthen both the government and civil society. This paradox has had an impact on local perceptions of the program. In Puntland, there was a perception that WSP was aligned with the opposition, while in Somaliland there is a perception that WSP is aligned with the government. A challenge confronting the program is to convince both government and civil society of the necessity of the other for building a sustainable state and a sustainable peace.

## Local Ownership versus International Community Participation

One of the stated goals of WSP internationally is to improve external aid agencies work in post-conflict societies. Menkhaus (2000) writes, “The Geneva office has maintained a strong commitment to this, while WSP Nairobi has striven to grant as much autonomy as possible to local offices. This has enhanced the sense of ownership of those communities to the program. It also allowed local communities to come together without the distractions of external actors to find their own voice and heal their own wounds. This was especially important in view of the perception that the external agencies are as much a part of the problem as they are a part of the solution. The Geneva office on the other hand was concerned that this marginalized the external organizations who, along with local authorities and civil society organizations, were the target beneficiaries of the program.”

Nevertheless, the lack of collaboration with the international community represents a lost opportunity to increase the impact of the program. Both WSP and the international community have contributed to this state of affairs (these are discussed in more detail elsewhere). One international organization official, said that one reason for the low participation of decision-making staff from international organizations in WSP workshops is due to the fact that the logistical constraints were not well thought out in designing the program. These constraints include the staff time entailed, the expenses entailed, and expatriates’ lack of Somali language capacity. Although not knowing the Somali language prevents expatriates from being full-fledged participants in the process, the experience of observing workshops (with a translator) is valuable in and of itself as it enables the observer to get a sense of the multiple perspectives and issues surrounding a given topic, as well as to learn which groups in a community propose which courses of action.

On the one hand, this is especially valuable since the programming of international organizations would benefit from being informed about the different perspectives of different groups on given issues and the probable winners and losers of different policies and programs. This is something that WSP is well-placed to do. A UNDP official expressed some frustration at feeling that SCPD “keeps to themselves” in order to maintain the Somali perspective, because he would like to have them influencing his programming.

On the other hand, the past experiences with international interveners have generally been disempowering for Somalilanders. Ownership of the program - both the products and the processes - by Somalilanders is one of the program’s greatest strengths. The lack of involvement of expatriates has provided Somalilanders the space to reach a consensus among themselves before attempting to have an impact on the policies and programming of international organizations.

Finally, the presence of internationals in workshops, given the potential resources that they represent, may have a distorting impact on the kinds of issues that emerge, as well as discouraging Somalilanders to think about the resources already available to them.

That might encourage Somalilanders to determine which are the critical resources to which Somaliland does not have access, and approach donors for only those resources.

Nevertheless, international organizations will continue to implement programs with or without being included in the WSP process. They will continue inadvertently to create winners and losers and promote the needs and interests of some groups over those of others, and inadvertently to generate conflict as a result. A consequence of the low level of participation by international organizations is that WSP may actually have less of an impact than it has to potential to have.

## Impact: Six Dimensions of Interest

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### Economic Sources

The WSP is a new type of program in Somaliland, and PAR is a new kind of process. It does not contribute directly to economic development and it does not bring significant monetary or material gain (either legitimate or illicit) other than several salaries and negligible per diems for a few hundred people. As such, it is generally misunderstood and not always appreciated. Indeed, some Somalilanders have nicknamed WSP “the Blah Blah Project”. (On the positive side, this has reduced the conflict generated for access to resources made available by the program, which is an all too common result of assistance programs.)

Some international experts also criticized the program. One internationally renowned conflict resolution expert said, “The problem with this kind of project (as opposed to infrastructure projects for example) is that they provide a way for the international community to avoid the responsibility of transferring wealth from the rich global North to the poor global South. Economic development is a precondition of peace, and this type of project does not address the economic causes of the conflict. The international community is instead putting money in low budget conflict resolution projects that don’t leave anything behind, certainly not food on the table”

The leader of a local NGO reported, “Conflicts in Somaliland are resource-based. They used to be about access to water and grazing and now they are about access to capital. This is interconnected with politics. Not everyone feels that they are getting their fair share. Peace has to be approached from two sides. One is through the Elders and the *Guurti* who have been successful in resolving conflicts such as the one in Burco. The other has to be through employment generation. That is why the lack of involvement of foreign donors in WSP is a weakness of WSP. Another weakness is that it does not address the real economic issues.”

Other Somalilanders interviewed for this paper especially those who had participated in the workshops - suggested that those who claimed that the program did not address economic issues do not understand the program, or in the case of expatriates, do not understand Somaliland.

That unequal distribution of resources (as they pertain to groups rather than to individuals) is more an issue for Somalilanders than absolute scarcity has already been discussed. This is something that expatriates do not always grasp - appalled as it were by the apparent material poverty of the place. In addition, because expatriates do not always understand the complexities of the society, they do not understand how programs and projects that appear even-handed or appear to benefit the most vulnerable, can be manipulated to create winners and losers that reinforce existing relationships. By increasing the awareness of international organizations in this regard, WSP has the potential to make significant contributions to reconciliation and conflict prevention. It is a weakness of WSP in Somaliland (and Nairobi and Puntland as well) that it has chosen

not to actively engage with international organizations. (This was a trade-off that was made self-consciously. The advantages and disadvantages of which has been discussed elsewhere.)

Nevertheless WSP has and will make contributions to reconciliation and conflict prevention in other ways. The PAR process provides space for those who seldom have - many participants said they had never had - the opportunity to voice their concerns directly to national officials. In some case this has and will contribute to changes in public policy, in others it has not or will not. Regardless of whether the beneficiaries are Somalilanders or expatriates, both the processes and the products tackle some difficult issues head on.

For example, the workshop on livestock marketing in Burco, which may be one of the most unstable towns in Somaliland, addressed the issue of the system of *gadbad iyo neef*. This system is practiced by the big livestock exporters (who are also big staple goods importers). Instead of purchasing livestock for export from middlemen with cash, they pay for the livestock with staple goods that they have imported. However the issue was raised at the workshop that instead of giving the goods to the middlemen at market value, they give them the goods at inflated prices. Because a few powerful traders have a monopoly of the market, there is little that the middlemen can do to change the current arrangements.

This workshop was attended by national and local officials, livestock export middlemen, and livestock producers, among others. Very powerful traders were also invited, but they did not attend, reportedly because they knew they would be targeted for complaint. Ideally, had they attended, the workshop might have resulted in a discussion of alternatives in which all stakeholders could have found “win-win” alternatives. As it was at least national and local officials had an opportunity to learn about issues of importance to some of their constituents. Whether or not that will result in policies aimed at regulating the *gadbad iyo neef* system remains to be seen.

Another contribution of both the workshops and the products of the PAR process is that they promote citizens’ understanding of the difficult choices and tradeoffs that the government must make everyday in its effort to govern in a context of extremely scarce resources. For example the choice between spending money to maintain a military in order to maintain the peace and security, versus spending it to rehabilitate the port in Berbera. Citizens need to understand these choices and determine their own priorities and communicate these priorities to the government.

By convening Somalilanders representing different perspectives to look at these issues from all sides promotes critical thinking about economic development issues. And as discussed elsewhere in this report, there are advantages to be gained from providing Somalilanders the opportunity to arrive at a consensus around economic development before they engage in dialogues with international organizations. As one representative of a civil society organization said, “international organization development projects are few and far between and they are part of the problem rather than the solution. One



problem is that the government needs to act like a government. It needs to have a clear program and dictate the terms to the international organizations.”

A WSP staff member said, “The program addresses peace building by addressing economic and social development. It enables internal and external actors to reach a common understanding and helps to avoid interventions that feed the conflict in a situation where central authority is not strong and therefore there is little accountability on the part of external actors. The research comes with recommendations with relevance for rebuilding, which external actors can translate into action.” To this end the products themselves can make a significant contribution to donors understanding of the issues and different perspectives on the issues.

Some expatriate staff of international organizations in Nairobi suggested that the inclusion of expatriates in the workshops encourages the “culture of dependency”. Years of development assistance to the Somali Democratic Republic did encourage middle and upper level actors to look first to international organizations to meet development needs. However the low level of assistance that has been provided to Somaliland by international organizations during the past decade has served to offset this phenomena, and has encouraged citizens not only to set priorities, but to create alternative means for meeting development needs.

Menkhaus (2000) in an evaluation of WSP Puntland notes, “Interviewees stressed that thirty years of very centralized rule of the Barre regime coupled with decades of top-down development aid meant that local populations had almost no experience contemplating, prioritizing, and operationalizing regional development. Nor did they possess a clear understanding of what external aid agencies would and would not do for them.” This view was voiced by WSP participants in Somaliland as well. In the workshop in Gabiley, when some individuals suggested that international organizations would fund a proposal, others would provide a “reality check” with the question, “What if they don’t? How else could funding be obtained for that proposal?”

However, an example of a process in which WSP did not participate and that some felt would have benefited from WSP participation involved UNDP’s Sectoral Committees. These were to have been organized by the Ministry of Planning as part of the planning process for the Five Year Plan, but were to have involved government ministries and international organizations working in particular sectors. As it turned out they were organized by UNDP. One UNDP official said, “WSP has not been involved in these. There is no doubt that it has been a donor driven process. However WSP participation might enabled it to be put back into Somali hands. In Nairobi, there was a need to get Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB) buy-in early on, but this did not happen and SACB has marginalized WSP. WSP would bring value-added to the Sectoral Committees and to the SACB since they have their ear to the ground. The Area Program Coordinator has a monthly meeting – which the UN heads it in the morning and the international NGOs head it in the afternoon. WSP is invited, but does not attend.” One reason for this may be related to WSP Somaliland’s primary identity as SCPD, which is registered with the government as a local NGO rather than an

international NGO.

## **Inter-Group Relationships**

Perhaps WSP's greatest contribution towards improving inter-group relationships, is that it has demonstrated that there are constructive ways to address conflict - and that indeed conflict can be constructive. Although the WSP process is not conflict resolution training per se, it is an educational process that looks more like Freireian participatory consciousness-raising approaches, than like conventional training approaches. The dialogue process demonstrates that there are ways of settling differences and solving problems that do not involve the suppression of dissent or resort to the gun.

The WSP gives legitimacy to discussions about intercommunal violence by reframing the discussion in terms of issues rather than in terms of identities. By focusing on issues rather than identities, participants perceive their needs and interests as being associated with categories of identity other than clan. As discussed elsewhere, WSP has revealed that there are overlapping cleavages in Somaliland society between individuals with more traditional worldviews and those with more Westernized or synthetic worldviews. By focusing on issues, these worldview conflicts become more readily apparent.

In some instances this has generated some conflict. For example one man from Sheikh who participated in the workshop there pertaining to the impact of the war on the family said, "Many men at the workshop felt that WSP was trying to undermine their role. People from Hargeisa have different ideas than we do. But they convinced us that they were not trying to undermine us. The workshop helped us to better understand each other's point of view. That is because the process was based on mutual respect."

Another participant in the workshop in Sheikh, a member of a local NGO, pointed out that, "Inter-group relationships are not something that can be changed in one workshop alone. There is a need to hold many workshops over a period of time. Maybe WSP staff should provide training of trainers so that local communities can learn how to conduct such dialogues themselves."

WSP has made a conscious effort to include the voices of all clans in its processes and its products. During the first phase of the research, WSP held focus groups with members of all of the clans of Somaliland, and by the end of the second phase will have held workshops in locations in which most, but not all, clans traditionally reside. In relation to clan relationships, however, a significant vote of confidence in WSP personnel was made by a government official who is a member of a minority clan that has suffered discrimination at the hands of the main clan families of both Somaliland and Somalia, who said "As a Tumaale I generally prefer working with expatriates over Somalis. Expatriates are "clan-blind" and do not discriminate against people on the basis of clan. An exception is the group of individuals who work at SCPD. I trust them to treat all clans equally as they go about doing their work."

However, like all activities in Somaliland, where per diems are to be paid, WSP has

generated some conflict in communities over the issue of participation in the workshops. In Gabiley (a small town in which there are three Consortia of Women's NGOs) some women's NGOs were invited by the local authorities and others were not, which created some rancor on the part of those who were not invited. In Sheikh, WSP initially requested that the Mayor select participants, which he did. However when he was replaced, the new Mayor was unhappy about the selections. WSP resolved the issue keeping half of the old Mayor's selections and asking the new Mayor to select the other half. This turn of events probably made for a much more representative group of participants. However, WSP learned from this lesson, and preparations for subsequent workshops included hiring a local "anchor person" to identify workshop participants.

## **Mobilization**

In the long-term WSP's greatest contribution may be to the mobilization of non-clan-based identity groups in Somaliland. Nevertheless, a WSP researcher emphasized that "the role of WSP is not that of community mobilization. Not only would that role get WSP in trouble with the government, Somaliland is not at that stage in the state-building process. The role of WSP is to facilitate communication between the people and the government."

There is general consensus that WSP has had a catalytic effect on civil society, which some international organizations in Nairobi said made the program valuable in and of itself. A member of the media Working Group emphasized that, "The process is the first time that the media has had an open discussion with members of the national government about both the media and the government's roles, rights and responsibilities, and had it published in a book". She added, "the media workshop in Borama showed that there is a need for dialogue between the media and communities as well. Under the Somali Democratic Republic the media was an arm of the government, so there is a need to build trust between communities and the media. The community where the workshop was held did not envision the possibility that it could communicate with the media and that the media can communicate news that is about and for the people."

The workshop also demonstrated that there is a need for the media to obtain and report the news from rural areas as well as from urban areas, so that rural areas can communicate their interests and needs through the media to decision-makers. Members of the media at the workshop took the opportunity to encourage community members to pass information to the media and to give interviews to the media.

A cornerstone of WSP elsewhere has been its focus on the role of civil society in giving voice to local communities in determining priorities for reconstruction. Civil society does not mean the same in Somaliland as it does in the West or elsewhere. It is encouraging to note that the individuals and groups who have adopted that nomenclature and participated in WSP workshops as its representatives, appeared to come from the middle levels, if not the grassroots, of society. Not too long ago these individuals and groups would have primarily been members of the elite who had appropriated the term

to gain access to the resources made available to civil society by the international community.

The process has also contributed to the mobilization of peripheral towns and rural areas by enabling them to articulate their issues vis-a-vis the national government, to members of that government, in a way that was empowering because it was afforded legitimacy. This is perhaps the first building block in the process of facilitating disempowered groups to mobilize on their own behalf. As Menkhaus (2000) writes of WSP Puntland, "Though essentially an elite exercise, WSP expanded local dialogue beyond the elite level. Politics and development are normally the domain of a relatively small group of leaders.... By holding the workshops in small towns and inviting nomads, fishermen, and other "non-elite" members of society to participate, the WSP team broadened political participation in a significant way."

A participant in the workshop in Sheikh said, "people in Sheikh feel neglected by the central government - and Sheikh is populated primarily by Isaq, and is only two hours on a paved road from Hargeisa - so we can imagine how towns in other parts of Somaliland feel. But the WSP workshop reminded us that we have something to say."

WSP also empowered intellectuals a category employed by Somalis to refer to individuals educated to the secondary or university levels. Many of these individuals hold technical degrees from abroad in fields such as medicine, engineering, and agricultural science. These individuals were marginalized both by the former government which made appointments based on clan rather than merit, and during the war, when the key to survival was the gun rather than the diploma. WSP brings these individuals into the policy process and enables them to contribute their expertise to state-building and reconstruction, through participation in the Working Groups, and through hiring them as resource people to facilitate the workshops and to write the workshops reports.

The program has contributed to mobilizing and empowering women by articulating issues, that have previously been considered private concerns (e.g., the impact of *qaat*), as public concerns at the local and national levels. Even more empowering is to have had those concerns be placed on the local and national agendas. It was reported that the day after the workshop on the impact of *qaat* on the family ended in Gabiley, the Mayor made a speech in which he discussed the need for measures to address the problem of *qaat*. The workshop also brought local and national scrutiny to bear on producers, traders, and users of *qaat*. A WSP researcher said, Gabiley is the "Minnesota" of Somaliland. If something is an issue in Gabiley it is likely to be an issue everywhere. If the Mayor of Gabiley declared that *qaat* is a problem that must be addressed, then *qaat* is more likely to be viewed as a problem in the rest of Somaliland."

The integration of women's concerns into the Self-Portrait of Somaliland - without labeling them as women's concerns or putting them in a separate pamphlet - makes a considerable contribution to mainstreaming women's issues. Equally important, WSP is

contributing to positive culture change by adding to the critical mass of women who have experience participating in public dialogues - and the mass of men getting accustomed to women doing so.

One component of mobilization involves capacity building, and WSP has reportedly made contributions in this regard as well. A staff member of an international NGO said, "One indicator of the success of this process is that one can see more strategic planning, and more organized, more formalized ways of doing things among my local colleagues these days. When I point it out, I discover that the person has attended an LPI or WSP workshop".

A high-ranking government official said that "The WSP process is extremely empowering to participants. Traditional processes have always been vertical as well as horizontal, because any man to speak out at meetings and this is how people's voices are heard up and down the chain. However the WSP process is new in that it brings together all stakeholders in a given sector at the same time and at the same place, and enables them to talk directly to each other about issues related to that sector."

### **Public Institutions and Processes**

The WSP process is focused less on horizontal relationships between elite and middle level actors, and more on vertical relationships between elites, middle level, and grassroots leadership. This approach appears to have been effective in enhancing the understanding of each other's points of view, among different groups in the society.

An MP who has participated in workshops in the regions, said that the experience of visiting other regions and listening to the views expressed by those communities has been an eye-opener for him. A member of the *Guurti*, who participated in the workshop in the village of Beki, said that he had never visited such a remote place, and that he was surprised to hear from the community that it considers the central government to be an obstacle. "The community asked me why the government is dragging its feet on implementation of decentralization. I had to explain to them that the government is reluctant for two reasons. First, because it is fighting to preserve the integrity of Somaliland. Second, because it is unable to extend its authority throughout the Somaliland territory - it really only has authority over Hargeisa and Gabilay."

As discussed elsewhere, the questions of how far to go with decentralization and how to go about it, are among the most, if not the most, challenging ones facing Somaliland at this stage in the state-building process. A government official who participated in the workshop in Beki described the discussion that occurred there. "The people in Beki are not happy about the fact that the central government appoints their DC. In Beki it seems that just when the community has gotten to know an official and established a working relationship with them, and just when an official has gotten to know the community and to understand their needs, the central government replaces them. There is a flip side", said the official, "If they chose their own officials, even in a small place like Beki, there are two main families and they will both want a DC who is closer to their family." The role of WSP in this situation was simply to educate people - using the WSP PAR

process - about their rights and responsibilities vis-a-vis local and national government. WSP was careful not to suggest any specific course of action.

Another issue that has been a topic of discussion in WSP workshops is the fact that some communities in the regions do not feel that their representatives in the *Guurti* and the Parliament represent their interests. They feel that their representatives are more focused on the power politics of the center, at the expense of the needs and interests of the regions, thus further marginalizing of these regions.

Taxation is another complex issue that has been tackled by WSP. A WSP researcher explained, "Most Somalilanders - including the tax collectors themselves - due to past experience with an extortionist government, do not understand the concept of taxation. They understand bribes, but not taxes. They do not understand government's and citizens' rights and responsibilities in terms of taxation." He continued, "Who can offer that kind of training? Not the government and not ordinary citizens. Only a "neutral" institution like WSP can provide it".

WSP has generated some conflict by increasing the voice of civil society in Somaliland, but it appears to be a constructive conflict. A senior ministry official said that from the perspective of the government, the process provides too much voice to communities and not enough to the government. He continued, "Although the Self-Portrait of Somaliland did not tell the government anything that it did not already know, it is helpful to have the perspective of the community written in a book to support policy decisions. It would be more useful to the communities if it also reflected the government's perspective."

Ahmed Farah explained, "In Somaliland the government was initially ambivalent towards the program. On the one hand, they liked it because it gave them access to civil society and the grassroots, on the other hand they recognized it as a powerful process, were afraid of that process, and wanted to control that process. This is especially true when the program addresses issues related to governance." However, an MP praised the project saying that it carries power from the center to the margins and is contributing towards an understanding that governance is not comprised only of ministers and members of parliament. The project gives people a chance to communicate with the government, and it gives the government a chance to show people that government can be good for them."

Both the research process and the research product are being employed in the process of state building. The MPs and members of the *Guurti* who are their houses' representatives to WSP workshops, report back to their houses' at each session. In this way, Parliament and the *Guurti* learn about the findings of WSP's PAR. The Self-Portrait of Somaliland is reported to have served as a baseline document to both the Ministry of Planning during the development of the Five Year Plan, and to the Parliament in its current deliberations pertaining to the drafting of the Constitution.

Both the decentralization and the media workshops are reported to have had some impact on the wording in the second draft of the provisional constitution. The legislature

was in session and they were working on drafting the constitution when the workshops took place. The findings of the workshops and the perspectives of participants were reported back to the Parliament and the *Guurti* and some of the recommended changes were incorporated.

During a Media Working Group meeting, an MP who is a member of the Working Group reportedly asked participants how the Constitution should be changed, saying “This is still a draft and we can still change it.” A civil society-based member of the Media Working Group said, “The constitution calls for freedom of the press, but at the same time there was interference from the government, including the shutting down of Jamhuriya (an independent newspaper that had printed some criticism of the government).” Since the workshop Jamhuriya has experienced less government harassment. For its part, Jamhuriya staff (who were at the workshop) have behaved more responsibly and has learned how to focus more on issues and less on personalities.” But, she acknowledged, this was also a result of a BBC sponsored training for the media which addressed these issues. Somaliland has a government newspaper, Mandeeg, which along with Radio Hargeisa, serve as vehicles for government. Members of the media would like to have an independent radio station, but do not have the resources to purchase one themselves.

A consultant for an international organization suggested that WSP’s most important contribution will be the development of a sustainable SCPD. “There is a need for long-term thinking on the issues that are currently tackled by WSP and there is a need for an institution that will do so.” However, a senior ministry official did not like the fact that SCPD was registered as an NGO rather than as a research institution. He said, “There is a need for such an institution to inform policy and provide training to the government. Such an institution should be independent from the government, but have a collaborative relationship with government.” He also acknowledged that the government does not at this time have the capacity to carry out the type of research that produced the Self-Portrait of Somaliland.

The reservations of the government are related to the fact that NGOs have more resources than the government. Therefore the best and the brightest go to work for NGOs rather than for the government. The international consultant reported that the Ministry of Planning has expressed consternation about its lack of capacity and its need for training about the processes of planning and evaluation. Such training is therefore a much needed service that an institution such as the SCPD could provide to the government.

WSP is in some ways more threatening to local governments than it is to the national government, and it has encountered some resistance from local governments. The Mayor of Sheikh was uncomfortable with WSP’s role of facilitating communication between the community and the national government, because he felt they were attempting to usurp his role. “According to the Constitution,” he said, “the role of local government is to take the concerns of the community to the national government. The local government knows the community and knows what the community needs and can

inform the national government”.

### **Political Leaders and Public Behavior**

The WSP PAR process of local consultation has had an impact on the programming approaches of some international organizations, who have seen its appropriateness to Somaliland and its effectiveness as a process. For example, the Human Rights Officer for the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, plans to employ a process modeled on WSP's PAR to elicit answers to such questions as: What are local conceptions of justice? What are local conceptions of human rights? What are local conceptions about what constitutes a war crime? What are local conceptions about what constitutes a human rights violation? These are important questions that have arisen in other contexts, such as South Africa, but the answers are not easy to get at through more conventional research methods. WSP's PAR model promises to contribute to answers since the answers emerge through the dialogue as participants struggle with the questions themselves.

A WSP staff member reported that some Puntlanders who attended the Arta Conference informed him that the impact of WSP on the representatives of civil society at the Arta Conference is apparent. These individuals who had participated in WSP workshops, talked about the rights and responsibilities of the government and the citizenry, and about the importance of consulting with communities in reconstruction planning. An expatriate staff member from an international NGO agreed that the cumulative impact of programs such as WSP, LPI, and Horn Afric, (LPI implements civic education and other programs throughout Somaliland and Somalia, while Horn Afric is based in Mogadishu) is an increasingly sophisticated discourse around civil society. He also stated that it was obvious at the Arta Conference that Somalis are no longer willing to accept top down governance.



## Internal and External Circumstances Affecting Impact

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### The International Community in Nairobi and Somalia

For a number of different reasons, WSP made the decision, first in Puntland and then in Somaliland, to disengage from the international community, and focus on programs and goals related to local processes. There were a number of sound reasons for this decision, some philosophical and others practical. One was that during most of the life of the program, the international community in Nairobi has been characterized by bureaucratic turf wars and counterproductive competition.

In an evaluation of WSP Puntland, Menkhaus (2000) writes, "Relationships between the UN and the EU/Somalia Unit (the major donor to Somalia) were extremely poor; power struggles and personality clashes within the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB) were also endemic; and rivalries within the UN agencies themselves were fierce. All this was fueled by dramatically shrinking pools of foreign aid for Somalia and a fundamental lack of consensus about how to channel assistance into a zone of state collapse. Prospects for inter-agency cooperation were thus virtually non-existent. WSP could hardly have stepped into an environment less conducive for the purpose of encouraging reflection, self-criticism, and innovation in international rehabilitation aid."

In Somaliland, for example, SACB attempted to establish a Sub-Office. One official from an international organization reported, "At the time the EU did not have a person in Somaliland and therefore they did not participate in the process of setting it up. When the EU did put someone in Somaliland, they felt they had not been consulted about the process and therefore they side swiped the initiative." These circumstances have not helped WSP to advocate changes in the practices of international aid agencies.

A UNDP official said that WSP had highlighted the fact that the lack of the participation of Somalis in designing assistance programs has been a serious problem to date. UNDP is preparing the Human Development Report for Somalia that will be published in 2002. The official said that UNDP recognizes that what is missing from the report is the Somali perspective and would like to be able to collaborate with SCPD to fill this gap. These reports address the themes of poverty eradication and capacity building in governance. UNDP would like a Somali partner such as SCPD to advise, criticize, help correct and help focus the work, provide analysis, and make proposals.

A source of frustration for WSP with the international community is that different organizations - and sometimes different individuals within the same organization - have different expectations of WSP. Representatives from these organizations have suggested the following roles for WSP and/or SCPD: (1) inform their own policies and programming; (2) serve as an evaluative mechanism for existing projects; (3) provide a source of information about the political process; (4) act as a contributor to the political process, (5) serve as a documentation center; (6) serve as an information clearinghouse; and (7) act in an advisory capacity as a think tank.

## Arta Conference

The Arta Conference, held in Djibouti between May and August 2000, is the thirteenth national conference since Siyad Barre's ouster, but it appears to have gotten further along the road towards establishing a government than previous ones. Farah (2000) writes, "In spite of its flaws, the Arta conference differs from the past reconciliation efforts in several important ways. First, previous efforts allowed faction leaders to play a central role, while the Arta conference widened the process by engaging civil society, traditional leaders, business class, and religious leaders in the process. This has angered leaders of the de facto political entities in northern Somalia who thought that they were ignored and their achievements not considered, nevertheless it made the process more representative and Somali driven. The number of participants increased from an initial 1000 to about 2000 persons comprising official and unofficial delegates representing different sectors of the Somali population and the diaspora."

However, there is also much about this new government that does not promote reconciliation - within Somalia or with Somaliland - including the fact that the new President served as Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister under Siyad Barre and that among the MPs are two of Barre's former military officers (Morgan and Ganni) who had responsibility for the destruction of Somaliland, and after Barre's ouster the destruction of the Bay and Bakool Regions.

This conference has created a considerable amount of uneasiness in Somaliland, the sources of which are both internal and external. There is little doubt that pressure will be exerted from certain groups inside Somaliland and from outside Somaliland to reunite with Somalia once its government is securely in place. This poses a considerable threat to the Somaliland government. In fact, on his return from Djibouti in September, a Somaliland clan leader, who was elected to the newly formed Somali Transitional National Assembly at the Conference, was sentenced to seven years imprisonment after he was found guilty of high treason by a Berbera court. He was subsequently released and pardoned by Egal, in response to pressure from international human rights organizations and residents of his hometown. This incident serves to highlight the perception of the Somaliland authorities that the Arta Conference poses both internal and external threats to the sovereignty of Somaliland.

## Recommendations

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(1) The effectiveness of WSP would be enhanced if WSP were to find a way to strengthen its relationships with international organizations, both in Hargeisa and in Nairobi, in a way that does not diminish ownership of the program by Somalilanders. In Hargeisa, the program's effectiveness would be enhanced by information exchange and logistical coordination between WSP and organizations perceived as doing similar programming (mainly LPI and UNESCO) if not by outright collaboration. For example it would ensure that workshops are not held in the same place at the same time. More important are the potential benefits to programming, which could result from collaboration on specific activities. An example, described elsewhere in this paper, was the collaboration between WSP and UNESCO in Puntland, where both organizations were addressing the issue of *qaat*. WSP was able to disseminate the findings of its research over UNESCO's radio program. To its credit, WSP has invited international organization personnel to participate in the Working Groups and consistently invites them to workshops.

In Nairobi, the program would succeed in its goal of impacting the policies and activities of international organizations much more effectively were it to establish relationships with those organizations. In particular it is recommended that WSP establish a working relationship with SACB. Again, the challenge is how to do this without sacrificing the Somaliland-driven nature of the program. Even if the time is not ripe to include international organizations in the workshops, efforts to encourage international organizations to utilize the findings of the PAR would contribute to this goal. There are different ways to accomplish this. One might be to hold regular workshops with international organizations in Nairobi, along the lines of the Working Groups in Hargeisa. These workshops might be attended by members of the research team and/or by members of the Working Groups. Admittedly this is a labor and capital intensive proposal, and more personnel and more funding would be required. In addition, an expanded staff may have the negative effect of weakening the close-knit WSP team.

(2) Another recommendation is that WSP renew its commitment to the full integration of women into the political and economic life of Somaliland as a key goal. If women are to be genuinely integrated into the public life of Somaliland, organizational culture in the decision-making realm will have to change. The culture of *qaat*, much like the culture of after hours beer drinking in the West, is an important part of an organizational culture that excludes women. WSP has taken the first steps by including women participants both in the initial phase of the research and in their subsequent workshops. More importantly WSP has included women's concerns among the themes that workshops have addressed. This has placed women's concerns on the national agenda. WSP now needs to take these concerns into consideration in terms of its internal organizational culture, in terms of the culture that is promoted in the workshops, and by modeling new ways of doing things.

WSP Somaliland learned from the experiences of WSP Puntland and hired a woman researcher. This may help account for the fact that WSP has succeeded in getting women's concerns on the agenda without generating a negative backlash. But having only one woman in a male-dominated environment can have the effect of isolating and silencing that one woman. This is especially so in an organizational culture in which the real business is conducted over *qaat*. It is therefore recommended that WSP strive for greater gender balance on the research team.

(3) Should WSP expand its work beyond Somaliland and Puntland, to include other regions in Somalia, it is highly recommended that the program begin in regions on the periphery, rather than in Mogadishu. WSP might first conduct the program in those regions that have achieved some measure of peace and afterwards in those regions that are still contested. This recommendation is based on the contribution that the program has and can make towards strengthening a political culture in which citizens have internalized the idea that they have a right and a responsibility to communicate with their representatives in local and national government, have the confidence born of experience to do so, and have articulated regional issues and reached consensus about regional priorities. Only then can some balance of power between the margins and the center be achieved. Some donors have indicated their eagerness to support the project in Mogadishu, but they are advised to do so with caution.

## Conclusion

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Whatever the future relationship between Somaliland and Somalia, WSP will have made a contribution towards peace in an conflict-torn region. Although WSP started in sites that are relatively peaceful - Somaliland and Puntland - the program and process could make a contribution to locations in Somalia that are in different stages of conflict as well.

In Somaliland, the program has contributed to taking the important first steps in the state-building and reconstruction processes. The WSP PAR process has created the space for Somalilanders to: (1) articulate the issues and challenges confronting them (2) acquire a better understanding of the paradoxes and tradeoffs involved in these processes (3) explore alternatives that may lead to “win-win” solutions to problems (4) begin to build consensus around priorities and approaches (5) facilitate local ownership of and responsibility for these processes, (6) raise consciousness about the roles, the rights and the responsibilities of citizens and government, and (7) demonstrate that there are peaceful ways of resolving differences and conflicting needs and interests.

The WSP dialogue process can be identified as a best practice in that it has contributed significantly to the empowerment, and in some cases the mobilization, of groups who have much to contribute to building the types of polity, economy, and society, that will achieve a sustainable peace, but who have more often than not been excluded from the processes of state-building and reconstruction. These include women, members of civil society, intellectuals, agricultural and livestock producers, and the populations of peripheral towns and rural areas. The empowerment of these groups promises to have a positive long-term impact on government policies and on the political culture of Somaliland.

Although the clan remains the primary source of individual and group identity in Somaliland, it does not necessarily in itself present the greatest challenge to state building and peace building. Rather is the conflicting worldviews relating to the structures and processes that will constitute the state that may prove to be the greatest constraint. Should they be based on traditional Somali political and judicial systems? Should they replicate Western democratic systems? Or should they be a synthesis of these two and/or other systems?

If WSP Somaliland decides to engage with the international community, the program may be identified as a best practice for ensuring the all Somalilanders, whether elites, middle level, and grassroots, have a voice in determining the policies and activities of international organizations. In contexts in which the state is either nascent, as in Somaliland, or non-existent, as it was until recently and remains in much of Somalia, the dialogue process can ensure that the priorities and aspirations of the population are made known to international organizations.

In contexts in which the state is illegitimate and unrepresentative, as it is in other countries in the region and elsewhere in the world, the dialogue process also has the potential to contribute to conflict prevention. By providing a vehicle for the population to communicate with the international community, the dialogue process has the potential to contribute to ensuring that the policies and activities of international organizations, not only do not contribute to aggravating latent conflicts, but are targeted in such a way that they can contribute to preventing them from becoming violent conflicts.

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## Persons Interviewed

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### Nairobi

#### **WSP/SCPD Staff**

Abdirahman O. Raghe  
Deputy Programme Director, WSP

Yusuf Ahmed Farah  
Principle Researcher, WSP

#### **USAID**

Gerald Cashion  
Director, Non-Presence Countries  
REDSO

Eric Richardson  
Deputy Director, Non-Presence  
Countries  
REDSO

Mia Beers  
REDSO

#### **Intergovernmental Organizations**

Randolph Kent  
UN Resident and Humanitarian  
Coordinator  
UNDP Resident Representative  
UNDP Somalia

Andrea Tamagnini  
Senior Deputy Resident Representative  
UNDP Somalia  
UNESCO-PEER

M. Devadoss  
Deputy Regional Coordinator

Said Warsame

National Coordinator  
UNESCO Somalia

#### **International NGOs**

Johan Svensson  
Regional Representative  
Life and Peace Institute

Jane MacAskill  
Regional Economic Security Unit, ICRC

### Somaliland

#### **WSP/SCPD Staff**

Hussein Abdillahi Burhan  
Director, WSP/SCPD

Mohamed Fadal  
Research Coordinator, WSP/SCPD

Matt Bryden  
Program Coordinator

Abdirahman Yusuf Artan  
Researcher/Video Production

Mohamed Hassan Ibrahim "Sheikh"  
Researcher - Livestock

Abdi Yusuf Ducale "Boobe"  
Researcher - Media

Suad Ibrahim Abdi  
Researcher - Society

Abdulrahman Jimale "Dheere"  
Researcher - Governance

#### **Somaliland, cont.**

### ***Intergovernmental Organizations***

Edward Johns  
UN Focal Point/Representative of the  
UN Humanitarian Coordinator  
UNCTAD/UNDP Somalia

Paul Simkin  
Somalia Rehabilitation Programme  
SME and Peace Building  
European Union/European Commission  
Somalia Unit

Mohamed Jamac  
Consultant to Ministry of Planning  
UNDP Somalia

Ahmed Rashiid Osman  
Consultant Trainer  
UNESCO

Mohamed Bile  
Education Officer  
UNICEF

Adam Abdelmoula  
Human Rights Officer  
Office of UN High Commissioner for  
Human Rights

### ***National Government***

Hussein Haji Cumar  
Member of Parliament

Abdillahi Sheikh  
Member of *Guurti*

Hassan Cumar “Hoori”  
Director General (DG)  
Ministry of Information

Awil Mohamed Farah  
Director General (DG)  
Ministry of Planning

Abdillahi Darawal  
Director General (DG)  
Rehabilitation and Resettlement

Mohamed Hassan Ali “Weji”  
Director  
Radio Hargeisa

Minister of Finance  
Mohamed Said “Gees”

Rashiid Sheikh Abdullahi  
Chairman  
War Crimes Committee  
Government of Somaliland

### ***Local Government***

Ali Mohamed “Geedi”  
Mayor and District Commissioner  
Sheikh

Mohamed Xamid Farah  
Deputy Mayor  
Sheikh

### ***International NGOs***

Abbe Farah  
Lifeline Somalia  
New York

Jonathan Karanja  
Field Coordinator  
CARE Somaliland

Abdi Ahmed Nuur  
Civic Education and Human Rights  
Trainer  
LPI

### **Somaliland, Cont.**

Ismail Cisa  
Democracy and Governance Trainer  
LPI

Rhoda Ahmed Yasiin  
Consultant, UNICEF

### ***Civil Society***

Shukri H. Ismail  
NAGAAD Consortium of Women's  
NGOs  
Women's Action for Advocacy and  
Progress Organization (WAAPO)

### ***Intellectuals***

Economist  
Mohamed Haji Salah Hassan

### ***Focus Groups***

#### **Gabiley**

Consortium of Women's NGOs  
MANDEEQ  
Consortium of Women's NGOs  
WADAJIR  
Consortium of Women's NGOs  
MANCAAL

Observed Workshop One and a Half  
Days of a Two and a Half Day  
Workshop on the theme of the impact of  
*qaat* on the family held in Gabiley on  
September 12-14.

#### **Sheikh**

Group of Workshop Participants  
Representing Different Target  
Populations